

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L S T A T E 2 0 6 3 9 0

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, PINS, PINT, ID

SUBJECT: GAO INQUIRY RE POLITICAL PRISONERS

REFS: (A) JAKARTA 11412, (B) JAKARTA 11169, (C) STATE

194555

1. EMBASSY PROPOSED RESPONSES TO GAO QUESTIONS BASICALLY EXCELLENT. ASIDE FROM MINOR INSERT TO QUESTION 1 SUGGESTED BELOW, OUR ONLY DIFFICULTY WITH PROPOSED RESPONSES RELATES TO QUESTIONS FOUR AND EIGHT CONCERNING TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

2. WITH RESPECT TO THESE LATTER QUESTIONS, WE RECOGNIZE THAT ARD FACTS CONCERNING TREATMENT OF DETAINEES ARE DIFFICULT TO COME BY IN INDONESIA. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE ALL AWARE OF ALLEGATIONS OF ILL TREATMENT OF PRISONERS (E.G., AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORTS, TESTIMONY AT SIREGAR TRIAL REPORTED PARA REF B) AND WE BELIEVE RESPONSES SHOULD REFLECT EMBASSY AWARENESS AND CONCERN ABOUT SUCH ALLEGATIONS. RESPONSE TO QUESTION FOUR INDICATES EMBASSY BELIEF THAT POLITICAL DETAINEES TREATED SAME AS CRIMINAL DETAINEES. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF EMBASSY COULD INDICATE BASIS FOR THIS STATEMENT, WHICH TENDS TO REFUTE REPORTS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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MISTREATMENT. WE ALSO BELIEVE RESPONSE TO QUESTION FOUR

WOULD BE MORE COMPLETE IF FURTHER EXPLANATION PROVIDED FOR LACK OF HARD INFO ON TREATMENT OF PRISONERS. SIMILARLY, WE BELIEVE THAT ANSWER TO QUESTION EIGHT WOULD BE MORE COM-

PLATE IF EMBASSY COULD PROVIDE SOME FURTHER ACCOUNTING FOR PRISONERS NOT HELD ON BURU, OR SOME EXPLANATION (PERHAPS CROSS-REFERENCED TO QUESTION FOUR RESPONSE) FOR LACK OF INFORMATION ON THESE OTHER PRISONERS.

3. FINALLY, WITH RESPECT TO QUESTION FOUR RESPONSE CONCERNING THOSE IMPRISONED AFTER JANUARY JAKARTA RIOTS, EMBASSY REPORTING INDICATES THAT CURRENT RELATIVELY BENIGN TREATMENT HAS OCCASIONALLY BEEN INTERRUPTED. THUS WE SUGGEST QUALIFICATION OF FINAL SENTENCE OF EMBASSY'S PROPOSED RESPONSE. FOLLOWING SUGGESTED CHANGES IN EMBASSY RESPONSES ARE ONLY TENTATIVE, IN THE SENSE DEPARTMENT WOULD WELCOME ANY CORRECTION OR AMPLIFICATION EMBASSY COULD PROVIDE.

4. QUESTION FOUR RESPONSE: QUOTE THE EMBASSY HAS NO FIRST-HAND INFORMATION CONCERNING TREATMENT OF PRISONERS SINCE FOREIGN OFFICIALS ARE NOT PERMITTED ACCESS TO DETENTION AREAS. THE EMBASSY IS AWARE OF AND CONCERNED ABOUT ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT OF PRISONERS. THE GOI DENIES THESE ALLEGATIONS. AS IS INDICATED IN OUR RESPONSE TO QUESTION EIGHT, THERE ARE RELIABLE REPORTS ON CONDITIONS OF PRISONERS ON BURU ISLAND, AND THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED OTHER REPORTS THAT POLITICAL PRISONERS RECEIVE THE SAME TREATMENT ACCORDED TO CRIMINAL DETAINEES. IN GENERAL, THE GOI STRICTLY CONTROLS ACCESS TO AND INFORMATION FROM THE PRISONERS, AND THERE ARE NO JUDICIAL MEANS FOR TESTING THE VALIDITY OF DETENTION OR OTHERWISE PROTECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THOSE IN DETENTION. UNDER THESE HIGHLY REGRETTABLE CONDITIONS, IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN RELIABLE VERIFICATION OF THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT.

THE EMBASSY RECEIVED REPORTS THAT INDIVIDUALS DETAINED FOR ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN THE JANUARY 15-16 JAKARTA RIOTS ARE GENERALLY BEING TREATED WELL AND HAVE USUALLY BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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PERMITTED VISITORS, READING MATERIAL, AND FOOD FROM THEIR FAMILIES. END QUOTE.

5. QUESTION EIGHT RESPONSE: INSERT FOLLOWING AFTER FIRST SENTENCE: QUOTE THE REMAINING APPROXIMATELY 25,000 DETAINEES ARE HELD IN VARIOUS OTHER PRISONS. FOR THE REASONS INDICATED IN OUR RESPONSE TO QUESTION FOUR, THE EMBASSY HAS LITTLE RELIABLE INFORMATION ON CONDITIONS IN PRISONS

OTHER THAN BURU. END QUOTE.

6. QUESTION ONE RESPONSE. IN THIRD SENTENCE, AFTER PARENTHETICAL CLAUSE, INSERT QUOTE ALLEGED UNQUOTE BETWEEN QUOTE FOR UNQUOTE AND QUOTE INVOLVEMENT, UNQUOTE, SO NOW READS QUOTE FOR ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN ACTIVITIES UNQUOTE.

7. WITH REGARD TO DOCUMENT REQUEST BY GAO, WE WOULD NOW PREFER THAT YOU REFER REQUEST TO DEPARTMENT. WE ARE HANDLING SIMILAR GAO REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS FROM MANILA IN WASHINGTON, AND IN THE INTEREST OF CONSISTENCY, THINK IT WOULD BE BEST IF WE DO SAME IN THIS CASE. AS WE INDICATED REF C, DECISION TO WITHHOLD DOCUMENTS MUST BE MADE AT HIGHEST LEVEL. HOWEVER, DEPT IN THE PAST HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING GAO TO NARROW REQUEST FOR CLASSIFIED INFO. WE WILL ATTEMPT PERSUADE GAO THAT PARTICULAR SENSITIVITY OF INFO REPORTED JAKARTA 8585 MAKES IT PREFERABLE THAT WE WITHHOLD THIS CABLE. WE UNDERSTAND GAO NORMALLY WISHES TO PUBLISH UNCLASSIFIED REPORTS AND WE WOULD TELL GAO THAT WE COULD NOT DECLASSIFY EITHER CABLE REQUESTED FROM EMBASSY, HENCE DIMINISHING UTILITY OF THESE CABLES TO GAO. WE MIGHT ALSO OFFER TO GIVE GAO NECESSARY INFO ORALLY, WHICH MAY BE SATISFACTORY TO GAO. WE WILL KEEP EMBASSY INFORMED ON WASHINGTON TALKS WITH GAO. KISSINGER

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